

## The Effect Of *Internal Service Quality* And *Learning Organization* On Job Satisfaction Of Hospital Employees

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the effect of internal service quality and learning organization on employee job satisfaction at hospitals in Makassar. Quantitative research with cross-sectional design involving 280 employees selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire measuring internal service quality (ISQ), learning organization (LO), and job satisfaction (JS). Multiple logistic regression analysis was used to test the relationship between variables. The results showed that ISQ (OR=7.714,  $p<0.001$ ) and LO (OR=7.913,  $p<0.001$ ) had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. In the ISQ dimension, teamwork (OR=4.132) and effective training (OR=3.340) were the strongest predictors. For the LO dimension, strategic leadership (OR=20.022) and continuous learning (OR=10.076) had the greatest impact. The study concluded that hospitals need to strengthen teamwork, provide effective training programs, develop strategic leadership, and encourage continuous learning opportunities to improve employee satisfaction.*

**Keywords :** Internal service quality, Learning organization, Job satisfaction, Hospital management, Health workers

### INTRODUCTION

Hospitals as health service institutions that provide comprehensive individual health services have a strategic role in efforts to improve public health. The success of hospitals in carrying out their roles is influenced by various factors, one of which is human resources. Employee job satisfaction is a key factor influencing the quality of service and hospital performance (Pantouvakis & Mpogiatzidis, 2013). Research by Abdullah et al. (2020) shows that job satisfaction has a direct influence on employee performance, where satisfied employees will be more productive in providing services. Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2022 shows that the level of job satisfaction of health workers in developing countries is still relatively low, with an average of 65%, which has an impact on the high turnover rate reaching 18-20% per year.

Internal service quality (ISQ) has emerged as an important concept in healthcare management. ISQ is defined as an “exchange process” in which employees as service providers offer their services to their coworkers to meet needs and create satisfaction (Marshall et al., 1998). A recent study by Goula et al. (2022) of 441

healthcare professionals in 6 hospitals in Greece found a positive correlation between ISQ dimensions and job satisfaction. In line with this, a meta-analysis study conducted by Wu et al. (2021) of 32 studies showed that increasing internal service quality contributed to increasing job satisfaction ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and decreasing turnover intention ( $r = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) in healthcare workers.

In addition to ISQ, the concept of learning organization (LO) has also received attention in efforts to increase job satisfaction. LO is defined as an organization that is able to carry out independent learning so that it has the speed of thinking and acting in responding to various changes (Senge, 1990). Dekoulou & Trivellas' (2014) research on 180 health workers showed that organizations that provide opportunities for their employees to continue learning, developing themselves and their professions have higher levels of job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A longitudinal study by Jallad (2021) revealed that the dimensions of strategic leadership and continuous learning in LO significantly increased job satisfaction (OR = 1.86, 95% CI: 1.42-2.44).

This condition encourages the need for a comprehensive study of the influence of ISQ and LO on employee job satisfaction, considering that these two factors have been proven to play an important role in increasing job satisfaction in various health care sectors (Pantouvakis & Mpogiatzidis, 2013; Varshney, 2019; Goula et al., 2022). This study generally aims to analyze and understand how internal service quality and learning organizations affect employee job satisfaction in Hospitals in Makassar. Specifically, researchers want to examine how much influence internal service quality has on employee job satisfaction, considering that quality internal services are an important foundation in creating a supportive work environment. Researchers also intend to analyze how the application of the learning organization concept contributes to the level of employee job satisfaction, considering the importance of adaptability and continuous learning in a dynamic health care environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Service Quality (ISQ)**

Internal Service Quality (ISQ) is an important concept in health service management that refers to the "exchange process" where employees as service providers provide services to their coworkers to meet needs and create satisfaction (Marshall et al., 1998). Hallowell et al. (1996) identified eight dimensions of ISQ, namely tools, policies and procedures, teamwork, management support, goal alignment, effective training, communication, and rewards and recognition. Recent studies by Goula et al. (2022) and Sutantio et al. (2023) show that ISQ, especially the teamwork and effective training dimensions, have a significant influence on hospital employee job satisfaction.

### **Learning Organization (LO)**

Learning Organization (LO) is defined by Senge (1990) as an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create desired results. Watkins and Marsick (2003) developed seven dimensions of LO including continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership. Jallad's study (2021) revealed that the dimensions of strategic leadership and continuous learning have the most significant influence on job satisfaction.

### **Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction itself is a positive emotional state resulting from the assessment of a person's work or work experience (Locke, 1969). Ahmad et al. (2020) identified eight dimensions of job satisfaction including leadership, training and development, teamwork, empowerment and participation, working conditions, rewards and recognition, communication, and working hours. Adamopoulos' (2022) meta-analysis shows that job satisfaction of health workers is influenced by three main factors: knowledge and skills, work motivation, and work environment.

The relationship between these three variables has been demonstrated in various studies. Pantouvakis & Mpogiatzidis (2013) found that ISQ has a positive impact on physician job satisfaction, while Dekoulou &

Trivellas (2014) confirmed a positive relationship between LO and job satisfaction. Furthermore, research by Njilo et al. (2020) revealed that the combination of high-quality internal services with learning organization activities effectively increases the job satisfaction of health workers. These findings indicate the importance of paying attention to ISQ and LO aspects in efforts to improve job satisfaction of hospital employees.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a *cross-sectional design*. The study was conducted at RSUD Labuang Baji Makassar, a type B government hospital with a capacity of 200 beds, from April to June 2024.

### Population and Sample

The population of the study was all employees of RSUD Labuang Baji Makassar totaling 840 people, consisting of 583 civil servants and 257 non-civil servants. The determination of the number of samples used the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a minimum sample of 270 respondents. To anticipate incomplete data, the number of samples was increased to 280 respondents. The sample inclusion criteria were employees who were actively working and willing to become research respondents. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included employees who were on leave or sick, employees who were on study assignments, and employees who refused to become respondents. The sampling technique used proportional random sampling with stratification based on the type of workforce.

### Questionnaire and Data Analysis

Data collection was conducted using three validated instruments that had been tested for reliability on 30 respondents at RSUD Haji Makassar. Internal service quality was measured using a questionnaire from Hallowell et al. (1996) consisting of 24 question items covering eight dimensions with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.753. Learning organization was measured using The Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) from Marsick & Watkins (2003) consisting of 21 question items with seven dimensions and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.756. Meanwhile, job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire from Ahmad et al. (2020) consisting of 34 question items with eight dimensions and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.757. All three questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Data analysis was carried out in stages using SPSS version 25. Data were analyzed using logistic regression analysis to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of independent variables on the dependent variable, with the significance level set at  $p < 0.05$  and a 95% confidence interval.

### Research Ethics

This study has obtained ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Public Health, Hasanuddin University with number 1135/UN4.14.1/TP.01.02/2024. Each respondent was asked to provide written informed consent before participating in the study. The confidentiality of respondent data is maintained by using a code and is only used for research purposes. Respondents have the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences to their employment status.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the characteristics of respondents based on age, gender, education level, length of service, number of working hours, and employment status. The majority of respondents were aged 20-35 years (39.3%), female (78.6%), had a D4/S1 education (33.6%), had a work period of 1-10 years (50.3%), number of working hours  $\geq 40$  hours per week (50 %), and had ASN status (77.1%)

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics (n=280)

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
20-35 years	110	39.3
36-45 years	101	36.1
>45 years	69	24.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	60	21.4
Woman	220	78.6
<b>Level of education</b>		
High School/Equivalent	11	3.9
D3/Equivalent	70	25.0
D4/S1	94	33.6
Profession	84	30.0
S2	20	7.1
S3	1	0.4
<b>Length of working</b>		
1-10 Years	141	50.3
11-20 Years	81	28.9
21-30 Years	50	17.9
>30 Years	8	2.9
<b>Number of Working Hours</b>		
< 20 Hours	38	13.6
20-39 Hours	102	36.4
≥ 40 Hours	140	50.0
<b>Employee Status</b>		
ASN	216	77.1
Non ASN	55	19.7
Part-time Doctor	3	1.1
Internship Doctor	6	2.1

Source: Primary

Data, 2024

Table 2 shows that both internal service quality (OR=7.714,  $p<0.001$ ) and learning organization (OR=7.913,  $p<0.001$ ) have a significant influence on job satisfaction. Internal service quality will have an influence of 7.714 times on job satisfaction, while learning organization will have an influence of 7.913 times on job satisfaction. Learning organization has a slightly stronger influence than internal service quality.

Table 2. Results of Logistic Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Internal Service Quality	2,043	0.297	47,283	1	0,000	7,714
Learning Organization	2,068	0.299	47,851	1	0,000	7,913
Constant	-2,116	0.282	56,245	1	0,000	0.121

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 3 shows that the internal service quality dimensions that have a significant effect on job satisfaction are only the teamwork and effective training dimensions ( $p$ -value  $<0.05$ ). Based on the OR value , teamwork has an effect of 4.132 times on job satisfaction. The effective training dimension has an effect of 3.340 times on job satisfaction. Meanwhile, the internal service quality dimensions that do not have an effect on the job satisfaction variable are the tools, policies & procedures, management support , goal alignment , communication, and reward and recognition dimensions. ( $p$ -value  $> 0.05$ ). To determine the magnitude of the influence of each influential variable, it can be seen in the OR value .

Table 3. Logistic Regression Analysis of Internal Service Quality Dimensions on Job Satisfaction

Dimensions	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Tools	0.031	0.937	1,031
Policies & Procedures	-0.307	0.389	0.736
Teamwork	1,419	0.005	4,132
Management support	0.636	0.311	1,889
Goal alignment	-0.215	0.837	0.806
Effective training	1,206	0.045	3,340
Communication	0.065	0.866	1,067
Rewards and Recognition	20,086	0.998	0.528

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 4 shows that the dimensions of learning organization that have a significant effect on job satisfaction are only the dimensions of continuous learning and strategic leadership ( $p$ -value  $<0.05$ ). Based on the OR value, continuous learning will have an effect of 10.076 times on job satisfaction. Strategic leadership will have an effect of 20.022 times on job satisfaction. While the dimensions of learning organization that have no effect on the job satisfaction variable are the dimensions of in inquiry and dialogue , team learning, embedded systems , empower people, and system connection .

Table 4. Logistic Regression Analysis of Learning Organization Dimensions on Job Satisfaction

Dimensions	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Continuous learning	2,310	0.003	10,076
Inquiry and dialogue	-0.529	0.649	0.589
Team learning	1,731	0.229	5,649
Embedded systems	0.557	0.346	1,746
Empower people	18,418	0.998	997.30
System connection	18,138	0.998	754.17
Strategic leadership	2,997	0.004	20,022

Source: Primary Data, 2024

## DISCUSSION

This study reveals three main findings that need to be discussed in depth: the effect of internal service quality on job satisfaction, the impact of learning organizations on job satisfaction, and a comparison of the strength of the influence of the two variables.

### The Influence of Internal Service Quality on Job Satisfaction

The results of the study indicate that internal service quality has a significant influence on employee job satisfaction. Employees assess the internal service quality at their workplace as satisfactory. With employees already receiving maximum service from their superiors and coworkers, it is hoped that they can provide quality service to their patients (external customers). The quality of service provided to Hospital employees often determines how well patients will be served. Health professionals cannot provide excellent service to their patients unless they first receive excellent service from other employees who work with them to provide the service. (Goula, et al., 2022).

This finding strengthens Grönroos' (1985) internal marketing theory which states that organizations must treat employees as internal customers and satisfy their needs to achieve organizational goals. Internal marketing focuses on how organizations serve their employees. Hallowell's theory, et al, (1996) also explains that in order for an organization to provide quality external services, the organization must first be able to satisfy its internal customers, by providing adequate equipment for work, clear and directed policies & procedures, the formation of a solid work team, two-way communication, alignment of organizational goals, support from management, and the availability of training for employees. Heskett's theory, et al (1994) "Service - Profit Chain", which connects internal service quality with employee job satisfaction. Internal service quality is the level of satisfaction felt by employees with the services offered by the service provider. The hospital will benefit if it can provide high-quality services first to its employees. Satisfied employees will be more enthusiastic in working, and ultimately can provide financial and non-financial benefits to the Hospital. Frost & Kumar (2001) showed that internal service quality is more important in large service organizations because internal service gaps are more common among many departments and work units. Hospitals are service organizations with a large scope, consisting of various professions and various units/installations/sections. The gap between employee expectations of the services they will receive and the reality felt by employees is what affects job satisfaction.



The significant influence between these two variables was found in a number of previous studies (Srivastava & Prakash, 2019; Njilo, et al., 2020; Abdullah, et al, 2020; Maharani, et al., 2020; Izza, et al., 2021; Miknevicius, E., et al, 2022; Goula, et al., 2022; Sutianto, A., et al., 2023). The concept of internal service quality has become a concern and phenomenon lately because it has an impact on both internal and external customers. Hospitals are expected to be able to create a good service atmosphere for primary customers (patients) and internal customers (employees) (Wulan, W., et al, 2020). Improving patient services encourages hospitals to increase employee satisfaction as an effort to motivate improved employee performance (Adriansyah, et al, 2020). Service quality is a comparison between customer expectations of a service and the service process they experience (Andalas, M., 2020). Hospital employees themselves are internal customers, where if employees feel satisfied or dissatisfied with the service they receive, it will be a benchmark for how they provide services to their patients. The concept of internal customer satisfaction must be understood as part of the Hospital realizing that providing high-quality services to employees will determine the performance of those employees.

Of the eight dimensions of internal service quality studied, teamwork and effective training emerged as the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. The strong influence of the teamwork dimension indicates the importance of collaboration between units and between professions in the hospital environment. This is in accordance with research by Bragadóttir et al. (2023) which shows that effective teamwork increases job satisfaction by increasing mutual support and knowledge sharing. When health workers work collaboratively, this will provide positive benefits for the patients they care for. No matter how hard the work is today, health workers feel satisfaction in a job well done if they have a great team (Dahlke, et al., 2018). Teamwork is very much needed in work, so that tasks and work are not only done by one person, but involve the participation of several people. In addition to work being completed faster, teamwork also aims to increase familiarity, trust, group cooperation by providing mutual support, comfort, advice, assistance with work, feelings of belonging, and mutual respect among employees, so that the results of group work can be maximized (Hayat, N., 2020). It must be realized that teamwork is a fusion of various individuals who become one to achieve a common goal. A team really needs the will to join hands to complete the work. It could be that one person does not complete the work or is not an expert in his work, but it can be done by other team members. This is what is meant by teamwork, the burden is shared for one common goal and complements each other between team members (Supriyanto, S., et al. 2021).

Meanwhile, the significance of the effective training dimension emphasizes the importance of continuous competency development, as found in the study by Osewe & Gindicha (2021) that the analysis of employee training needs, selection of training that is relevant to employee work, the number of training hours provided, the availability of funds for employee training and development have a positive correlation and are strong predictors of job satisfaction. Other studies state that training in the form of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors has a significant effect on employee satisfaction (Nuryanti, *et al* ., 2020). Hospitals need to improve the skills of their employees by educating and training employees for long-term competitiveness. Hospitals that invest in providing training to employees use effective methods to develop and create competitive human resources in their fields. Having quality employees can give companies a competitive advantage in the market by enabling their employees to adapt to environmental changes and respond to competition more effectively (Hidayat, *et al* ., 2024).

### **The Influence of Learning Organization on Job Satisfaction**

Learning organizations show a significant influence on job satisfaction. The level of employee job satisfaction is high when they feel that the Hospital management has taken the initiative to create a culture of continuous learning both individually and as a work team in the Hospital environment. Employees will feel satisfied when they are given space to express their opinions or views, and they are also able to investigate and

understand differences of opinion or views of their superiors and coworkers. Employees will also feel satisfied when they see that what they do has a positive impact on the progress and development of the Hospital. In addition, employees will feel satisfied when they see their leaders using learning as a strategy to achieve Hospital goals. The better the Hospital implements a learning organization in daily work practices, the more satisfied employees will feel. With a learning organization, employees will feel always supported to continue learning, develop superior thinking patterns and the freedom to express their ideas, and produce something creative and innovative (Sagari & Kiswanto, 2023), thus making employees more satisfied at work.

Örtenblad's theory (2002) groups the understanding of learning organizations into four types. The first type, the old organizational learning perspective, sees learning as the application of knowledge at different levels. The second type is the workplace learning perspective, which sees learning organizations as organizations where individuals learn at work. The third type is the learning atmosphere perspective, which sees learning organizations as organizations that facilitate the learning of their employees. The last type, the structure perspective, sees learning organizations as flexible forms of change. Among several learning organization perspectives evaluated by Örtenblad (2002), the Marsick & Watkins (1993) approach is the only theoretical framework that covers all four understandings of the learning organization idea (Yang, et al., 2004).

Marsick & Watkins' theory (1993) explains learning organizations into three levels. The first is the individual level, which consists of the dimensions of continuous learning and inquiry & dialogue. The second is the team or group level, namely the team learning dimension. The third is the organizational level, which has four dimensions, namely embedded system, empower people, system connection, and strategic leadership. This theory explains that individuals learn first as individuals, but when individuals join together in an organization, they will learn as groups, teams, networks, and larger and broader units. This combination of individual and team learning will perfect the achievement of the organization's vision and mission. The findings in this study indicate continuous learning and strategic leadership as the dimensions that most influence job satisfaction. These findings support Senge's (1990) concept of the importance of continuous learning in organizational adaptation. Strategic leadership emerged as the strongest dimension, confirming Jallad's (2021) research that leadership that supports organizational learning significantly increases job satisfaction.

The high influence of continuous learning reflects the need for health workers for continuous professional development. The existence of equal opportunities and rights to continue learning - not only formal education, but also manifested in daily work activities - for all Hospital employees, from the lowest line to top management, functional and structural, will make employees more satisfied. Employees continue to learn independently to develop their abilities, capacities, personal skills to achieve the desired work results. Independent learning begins with self-awareness of the potential and limitations they have, understanding that the world of health is experiencing rapid development in terms of science and technology, understanding that by increasing the knowledge, skills, and expertise they have, it will directly impact the services provided to patients and the Hospital. This is in line with the study by Dekoulou & Trivellas (2014) which found that organizations that provide continuous learning opportunities have higher levels of employee job satisfaction.

Strong strategic leadership shows the importance of the role of leaders in creating and supporting a learning culture, as expressed by Wang & Rashid (2022) that leadership that supports learning has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Leaders play an important role in creating a *learning organization*, because leaders are the ones who will often teach new skills to their employees while working. Meanwhile, learning is an important factor for employees in developing their careers because learning will create competitive advantages. These two things will affect employee job satisfaction (Ghayas & Khan, 2019).

### Comparison of Influence Power and Practical Implications

The analysis shows that learning organizations have a slightly stronger influence than internal service quality on job satisfaction. This finding indicates that in the context of hospitals, the ability of the organization



to facilitate learning and adaptation is slightly more important than internal service quality in influencing job satisfaction. This can be explained by the characteristics of the health sector which is dynamic and continuously evolving, as explained by Maharani et al. (2020).

The findings of this study have several important practical implications:

1. Hospital management needs to prioritize the development of strategic leadership that supports continuous learning, for example through leadership development programs that focus on creating a learning culture.
2. Effective training programs need to be designed based on employee needs analysis and periodic evaluation, taking into account relevance and applicability to the job.
3. The teamwork system needs to be strengthened through structured inter-unit and inter-professional collaboration mechanisms, supported by an effective communication system.
4. Continuous learning can be facilitated through the establishment of communities of practice, knowledge sharing systems, and support for ongoing professional development.

### **Research Limitations**

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the cross-sectional design used cannot explain the causal relationship between variables. Second, the use of self-report questionnaires can cause common method bias. Third, this study was conducted in one government hospital, so generalization of the findings needs to be done carefully.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that internal service quality and learning organization have a significant influence on employee job satisfaction in hospitals in Makassar. Learning organization shows a slightly stronger influence than internal service quality. The dimensions of strategic leadership and continuous learning in learning organization, as well as the dimensions of teamwork and effective training in internal service quality are the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of developing strategic leadership that supports continuous learning, as well as strengthening teamwork and effective training programs in an effort to improve hospital employee job satisfaction.

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### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION**

YSP: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data analysis, writing the first draft

IR and AM: Supervision, validation, review and editing All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the conduct and publication of this research.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data supporting the findings in this study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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